



Dear Mr. Wilson,

We have been following the progress of the Oster Quarry proposal and have several concerns about the project and its impact on our community. It is our understanding that this large scale quarry project would have significant impacts on the community of Santa Margarita and its residents. While we greatly respect private property owners' rights, we feel that this project cannot possibly avoid infringing on the property rights and the quality of life for surrounding neighbors.

With that in mind, we would like to ask the following questions to determine if the EIR, currently under consideration in draft form, has effectively addressed the following issues and if the county is prepared to elicit answers and acceptable solutions from the quarry owners regarding:

1. Traffic generated by the quarry, consisting of large trucks hauling materials to and from the plant, and traffic incidental to quarry operations and employees. Highway 58 is a narrow two lane rural road with long stretches of road with no shoulders. In many of the curves, it is not feasible for a large semi truck and trailer(s) to execute the curve without crossing over the median line or driving on the shoulder of the road.

- Heavy truck traffic on a road not designed for such loads will cause significant deterioration of the road and incur maintenance costs for the state of California. Having seen what the California Vally Solar Project's heavy truck traffic has done to Highway 58 and the constant repairs that are being effected in order to maintain the pavement is an excellent prototype for what quarry traffic will do to the road. We have friends in California Valley who have significant deterioration to their vehicles (suspension problems, rattles, excessive wear on tires, motors, etc.) due to having to drive over the damaged road surface.

QUESTION: Is there any suggestion that the quarry owners will have to assume any sort of responsibility for road maintenance of Highway 58, or will this expense be the sole responsibility of the taxpayers?

- The trucks will be driving through three blocks of residential homesites and past an elementary school and the main school crosswalk.

- The trucks must cross the railroad prior to entering the main highway running through the town of Santa Margarita.

QUESTION: Is there room for a gravel truck with two trailers to safely wait at the stop sign without the second trailer resting on the railroad tracks? How will the traffic affect the quality of the residential neighborhood through which it will travel, and how will the children attending Santa Margarita Elementary School be protected from the additional traffic and deterioration?

of air quality due to vehicle emissions of the trucks?

SUGGESTION: An alternate route be constructed for the quarry traffic that does NOT use Highway 58.

2. Noise

The noise from 200 truck trips a day as well as quarry operations must be dealt with. The area in question is located in a canyon and noise (and dust and fumes) will definitely impact residents on Park Hill Road as well as those on Highway 58.

QUESTION: Do the quarry owners have a plan to ameliorate the noise of quarrying with explosives as well as that of the 200+ daily truck traffic so as to lessen the impact on those neighbors who live next door to the project?

3. Air Pollution

The dust from quarrying operations, the vehicle emissions from the materials transport trucks, and possible air contaminants from material being brought in to recycle, and trucked out after processing must be addressed. It is a known fact that blasting creates particulate matter that can be harmful when inhaled. Given that there are already two other quarries operating in this area, we are concerned about the air quality and pollution from quarry blasting.

QUESTIONS: Will quarrying operations increase the risk of exposure to Valley Fever, known to exist in this area and dispersed due to soil disturbance? It seems evident, based on the recent outbreak in California Valley at the construction site of the Solar plant, that this is a very real concern.

Who and what will monitor the air quality issues that arise from a mining operation and how often?

4. Water

Residents in this area are already dealing with a severely limited water supply; residential water wells often produce less than a gallon per minute due to limited supplies in the aquifer.

QUESTIONS: How much water will the quarrying and recycling operations need and what is the source of the water?

Will the operation draw on the aquifer(s) the area residents rely upon and diminish their supply even further? If the operation causes residential wells to dry up, will there be any recourse to those of us who no longer have water?

What steps will be taken to avoid contamination of the two nearby water courses; the Salinas River (which eventually empties out into the Monterey Bay Marine Sanctuary) and the creek which parallels Park Hill road for many miles.

SUGGESTION: Instead of drawing on the aquifer and the Salinas River, require that the quarry truck in water for the quarry operation to be stored on site.

4. Land use code

There are several homes situated very close to the proposed quarry site; one is approximately 200 feet away from the site. If the quarry is approved, we are concerned not only about the detrimental effect on the property owners in the immediate vicinity of the operation but the fact that their property values will certainly plummet. After all, who would want to live a few hundred yards from a blast site?

QUESTION: Will there be any sort of monetary compensation for the loss in value of the proximal properties and if so, where will that money come from?

5. Restoration and reclamation

No mining operation can fully restore an area to its former landscape. All too often projects which have a set time line seem to get extensions and amendments to the original permitted use, and since the operation is already in place and has been operating for years, previously prohibited activities become possible "efficient" uses.

QUESTION: Will requirements be in place to prevent the quarry from being left "as is" and/or expanding operations or turning the mine into a new landfill operation, etc.? In other words, what will the county do to protect the area in 30 years or at whatever time the quarrying operations cease?

6. Habitat and wildlife impact

The quarry is sited proximal to two water courses which are natural migration corridors for a great deal of wildlife and habitat for birds. Considering not only the physical operation of material mining, but the effect of increased noise, traffic and pollution from the operation and the vehicles there will be an impact on the wildlife.

QUESTION: What wildlife, flora and fauna both, will be impacted by the quarry and how will that be mitigated?

7. Geographic Equity

There are two other quarries in close proximity to the proposed Oster Quarry. Both are situated in locations which have far less of an impact on the surrounding communities and both have reserves sufficient to meet the need for quarry product well beyond the 30 year proposed life span of the Oster quarry.

QUESTION: Is it economically sensible to add a third quarry to this area, and are there sufficient benefits in doing so to outweigh the serious negative impact the Oster quarry project will have on this area? What are those benefits?

We appreciate the opportunity to express our concerns and appreciate your

consideration and we apologize for the length of this email. We have also mailed you a hard copy of the above for your records. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Robert and Janita Baker
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